

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 002579

SIPDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DNG: CO 12/19/2013

TAGS: [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [EPET](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: BIO ON WARRI NAVAL COMMANDER CAPTAIN O.B. OGUNJIMI

REF: ABUJA NI 1445

Classified By: J GREGOIRE FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

11. (S N/F) On November 19, Poloff and Econoff met Captain Olufemi B. Ogunjimi, Commanding Officer (CO) of Nigerian Naval Station Delta (NNS Delta), headquartered in Warri, Delta State, at a forum discussing peace and security in the Niger Delta.

12. (S N/F) Septel provides further context and background to place this potentially up-and-coming officer in a political environment with examples of how things really work in his world. He is interesting not simply because he is the CO of the Naval base at Warri, but rather, because he is willing to talk rather openly about how politics and money play into his job as a military officer.

13. (S N/F) On December 10, the same ConGen officers met with Ogunjimi at a restaurant in Lagos for a discussion on the situation in the Delta. Dressed casually in a loose shirt and slacks, Capt. Ogunjimi, a boyish looking, reserved man, described his home of origin only as "up there, far away from Lagos." He noted he has a wife and children living on Victoria Island in Lagos, where he has kept a home for 16 years, although he said he does not like the chaotic nature of the city.

14. (S N/F) Ogunjimi told Poloff and Econoff that in the mid-1980s, as a Second Lieutenant based in Lagos, he conducted the first seizure in Nigeria of a vessel caught illegally bunkering oil. Addressing a theme of "political reality" he returned to throughout the conversation (septel), Ogunjimi said he was offered a bribe to release the vessel, which he claimed he turned over to his commanding officer. Ogunjimi also said he quickly asked for a transfer when, on the day of the seizure, the men he arrested appeared at a restaurant in which he was eating and paid for his meal. Ogunjimi said his transfer was approved, and added that the ship and crew were later released.

15. (S N/F) As Commanding Officer of NNS Delta, Captain Ogunjimi said he commands a force of some 600 men, and reports to Rear Admiral Bob-Manuel, the Flag Officer Commanding (FOC) for the Western Naval Command (WNC) based in Apapa, Lagos. Ogunjimi's command is a component of the Joint Task Force (JTF) Operation Restore Hope, established in August to coordinate military and security efforts in the Delta in response to violence between ethnic groups there and activities involving oil theft (reftel). Ogunjimi discussed with Mission officers his work over the last year, and the challenges he and his men face with what he described as inadequate equipment and limited resources. He said the political pressures of working in the Delta are great, noting that he has learned to take vessels he seizes for illegal bunkering to Lagos, rather than to hold them at his base in Warri where pressure to release them is more direct. He said that of the 10 ships he seized in eight months, two were ordered released by his superiors (septel).

16. (S N/F) Ogunjimi said he approves of the Navy's policy of rotating Warri commanders in and out annually. He says this practice should prevent them from becoming entrenched and corrupted by the political environment of the Delta, and will also keep them safe. He half-jokingly referred to threats upon his life and said that for personal security he lives on the base when his family is not visiting (as do other JTF senior officers, he said). To maintain the appearance of impartiality and objectivity, the Captain said he does not make friends in the Warri community or spend much time there because to do so would immediately give rise to accusations of favoritism.

17. (S N/F) Ogunjimi appeared satisfied with his performance at NNS Delta, but said he looks forward to his next posting as a Staff Officer at Naval Headquarters in Abuja. He said his replacement, whom he did not name, should arrive at Warri on or about January 8. Ogunjimi will leave the post in mid-January. He said commanding the Warri base "would be a beautiful job, if not for the politics." Nonetheless, he said he would rather not command a Naval base again.

18. (S N/F) COMMENT: If we can take him at his word and demeanor, as well as his command's recent public record,

Captain Ogunjimi seems to be an honest officer interested in preserving security and upholding the rule of law. Ogunjimi is probably a man to watch as he makes his way toward higher ranks. He said he should be eligible for promotion to commodore within four years, after his tour at Naval HQ and a stint at the Nigerian War College. He would likely remain a good contact of the Mission if called upon. END COMMENT.
HINSON-JONES